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Women Champions in the Energy Sector



Maame Tabuah Ankoh,
World Bank Ghana Consulting Energy
Specialist



Maame Tabuah conducting a general inspection at the Bui Power Station.

Photo credit: Bui Power Authority

This portrait is part of the USAID-funded Power Africa West Africa Energy Program's series on women champions in the energy sector, featuring women who have overcome barriers, defied stereotypes, and succeeded in their cho-

"At the end of the day it is not about what you have accomplished, it is about the person you have lifted or the impact you have made on your community."

These are the words that have guided Maame Tabuah Ankoh in both her professional and personal life. She is currently a Consulting Energy Specialist with the World Bank in Ghana where she provides analytical and advisory support to the Bank's energy sector portfolio. She is currently working on the Energy Sector Recovery Program which promotes a more competitive and dynamic energy sector where private investments can thrive, as well as the Energy Sector Transformation Initiative Project which seeks to strengthen the capacity of the energy sector to implement reforms and improve planning and coordination. Throughout her career, she has always been intentional about the kind of projects she has worked on, always making sure she is contributing to endeavors that have positive, wide-reaching, and sustainable impacts.

Her journey into the energy sector began with a keen interest in how gadgets work and a love for physics and math from a very young age. Although her parents did not attend university, they always encouraged her educational endeavors. The middle child among 12 siblings, Maame was the first in her family to attend university. She completed her bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in 2006. Out of the 120 students in her class, she was one of only 15 girls. *"Even though there were more boys in the class, I never felt different because we were all treated the same and our main focus was to learn."*

After obtaining her college degree, Maame successfully applied to be an engineer on the Bui Hydro-Electric Dam Project. "I was very excited to be part of this project as the engineers who constructed the Akosombo Dam, also known as the Volta Dam, the first artificial dam in Ghana, belonged to an older generation, so this was an opportunity **to be part of a grand new project for my generation.**"

During her time at Bui Power Authority (BPA), Maame spent her free time interacting with young girls in the Bui community and conducting



Maame Tabuah with students of Gyama Ahenkro Junior High School after a mentorship session on the importance of STEM education.

Photo credit: Maame Tabuah personal photo archive



Maame Tabuah testing a cement sample to ascertain its strength to support a transmission tower.

Photo credit: Bui Power Authority

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simple science experiments to harness their interest in science and change their perceptions that girls cannot excel in science, technology, engineering, and math. *“I am really passionate about this (issue) because Africa has a long way to go in development and to bridge our development gap, we need to integrate the female perspective into the workforce,”* she says.

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After her work with the BPA, she continued her journey by joining the team that developed the Integrated Power Sector Master Plan (IPSMP) for the Energy Commission. *“The IPSMP is now being integrated into Ghana’s energy sector planning and is guiding policy, which I am very proud of as it has always been my dream to advance energy policy,”* she notes.

Another moment of pride for Maame was when she was selected to participate in the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders in 2016. The fellowship involved participating in a six-week training at the Energy Institute hosted by the University of California-Davis. The training focused on leadership skills, legal and policy reform solutions, and best practices for addressing Africa’s major energy challenges.

Maame believes in constant learning. She obtained a master’s degree in renewable energy in 2013 and is now pursuing her Ph.D. in Sustainable Energy Technology at the Kwame Nkrumah University, which she expects to complete in 2021. She is certain she could not have made it this far without a strong support system. *“I have a lot of support at home, which has enabled me to really give off my best in my work. (I know that) not a lot of women have (this kind of) support system, so I really appreciate that.”*

Her advice to women who want to succeed in this sector? *“Plan and be very intentional in their careers in terms of courses to take, practical experience to gather and opportunities to pursue.”*